

Researcher studies controversy

By ELSPETH BEIER

FRANKLIN — Even though the controversy of which American reached the North Pole first isn't the hottest item in the headlines this year, there are people who care.

Marian Murphy, 26475 Scenic, Franklin, is one of the most active believers in Dr. Frederick A. Cook's claim to being the first white man on the top of the world. She is dedicated to proving it.

Mrs. Murphy, along with her Birmingham friend, Mrs. John T. Elderly, recently returned from a meeting of the society dedicated "to gain official recognition for the scientific and geographic accomplishments of the American physician and explorer."

of Dr. Cook's exploits from all over the country and was hosted by the county historical society.

Mrs. Murphy, who is interested in Dr. Cook and opposed to Rear Adm. Robert E. Peary's claim to fame, was a special guest at the meeting.

She is in the process of completing a manuscript on the maligned Dr. Cook and trying to decide whether or not to follow publisher's suggestions to direct the final book to the juvenile biography market.

Mrs. Murphy's interest in Dr. Cook is not a recent part of her life.

HER HUSBAND Eugene, from his early manhood, strongly believed in Dr. Cook's claim to be the first man to reach the North Pole.

He corresponded with the doctor-explorer through the 1920s, into the 1930s and finally attracted him

to the Murphy's Franklin home for a week's visit in 1938.

During that week, Murphy, then an executive with the Kresge Co., was rounding up financial support for a flying expedition to verify and locate existence of what was later known as "the ice islands."

Mrs. Murphy recalled the much-publicized visit with pleasure and sorrow, because within the next 18 months both her husband and Dr. Cook died.

The search for the "ice islands" was one of the keys to Dr. Cook's claim of the North Pole discovery. Their existence was not fully verified until mid-World War II by Rear Adm. Charles W. Thomas of the U.S. Coast Guard.

JUST BEFORE Thomas died last year, he reviewed and edited Mrs. Murphy's manuscript and sent highly flattering comments to the Franklin author on her style and research.

Although Mrs. Murphy has spent most of the past 30 years fully occupied as school librarian in Birmingham and Farmington high schools, her keen interest in Dr. Cook has never left her.

With the 100th anniversary of Dr. Cook's birth, held in Horton-

ville, N.Y. in 1966, her determination to write a book revived.

She has innumerable letters and documents, books and pamphlets authored by principals and defendants of Dr. Cook's expedition. She also has translated from Italian an essay on Dr. Cook's similarly disputed conquest of Mt. McKinley in Alaska.

"While most American reference books claim Peary was the first man at the pole, European encyclopedias accept Dr. Cook as the first," she said.

"DR. COOK successfully reached the pole April 21, 1908. He was forced to hold up in an ice cave for the entire winter of 1908-09 because of the drifting ice packs, whose westerly movement was then unknown."

He reached a telegraph station and wired his news Sept. 1, 1909. Robert Peary, sponsored by the National Geographic Society, reached the nearest cable station five days after his arrival and sent word to the world, "I have the pole, April 6, 1909."

From that time forward the controversy raged.

Mrs. Murphy is determined to set the record straight.



Mrs. Murphy reviews her notes on Dr. Cook (Photographed by Patricia Beck)

Correspondence from Dr. Cook was researched and retained

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'U-Turn' center elects directors

"U-Turn," Bloomfield-Birmingham Center for Human Development, has elected its board of directors for 1974.

Harry Keller, assistant principal of Groves High School, Birmingham, will head the seventeen member board as president. Tom Cavanaugh of Clawson will serve as vice president. Mary Ledermann of Birmingham as treasurer; and Pamela Craig of Sterling Heights as secretary.

Directors for the coming year are: Steven Barnett, Franklin; Paula Beech, Birmingham; Stuart Borman, Birmingham; Sister Judy Burkhardt, Birmingham; Herbert Duncan, Birmingham; The Hon. Carl F. Ingraham, Birmingham; Ann Kale, Troy; John Leaver, Rochester; Ed Ledermann, Birmingham; Nancy McKee, Birmingham; Dennis Rozema, Clawson; Rev. Charles Somers, Birmingham; and Robert Wensberger, Birmingham.

"U-Turn" serves junior and senior high students in the tri-community area of Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and Bloomfield Township. The group was organized and is operated by members of the community, school authorities, the courts, clergy, police and governmental agencies and organizations in the area.

The first fund-raising project by the newly elected directors will be a mailing campaign. The proceeds will enable more young people to participate in the program, which now has a lengthy waiting list due to lack of funds. Miyo O'Neill of Birmingham is chairwoman of the project.

"U-Turn's" program strives to help young people re-direct their thoughts and attitudes into development of a more meaningful life style. The program is aimed at those involved or dangerously near substance abuse and anti-social behavior.

Headquarters are located at 2636 Franklin Road near Telegraph in Bloomfield Township. John Genovesi is director of the program, and Woody Shock is associate program director. For further information, call 658-2520.

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